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Does Spatial Concentration Always Mean a Lack of Integration? Exploring Ethnic Concentration and Integration in Toronto

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Toronto is Canada's major immigrant-receiving city and contains a wide diversity of ethnic groups. Although Canadians are generally receptive to immigration there is evidence that some recent immigrant groups, especially those concentrated in Toronto's inner suburbs, are not faring well economically. In this research we question whether spatial concentration necessarily equates with a lack of integration. Specifically, we review Toronto's changing ethnic geography, comparatively evaluate the functional integration of selected ethnic groups who entered Toronto primarily in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s with those who came later, and provide a more subjective perspective on integration, drawing from the experiences of recently arrived Bangladeshi immigrants. The findings call into question traditional perspectives on ethnic concentration, especially the spatial assimilation model, and highlight the importance of considering subjective integration, particularly satisfaction with life in the new country, as a way of alleviating the barriers of weak functional integration. We conclude from the Toronto case study that spatial concentration does not necessarily equate with a lack of integration although, for disadvantaged recent immigrants who tend to be concentrated in inner-suburban enclaves, there may be cause for worry. The latter is of increasing concern to city officials and community agencies.

Keywords: Ethnic Concentration; Functional Integration; Subjective Integration; Bangladeshis; Toronto

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Introduction

In contrast to many European countries where immigration is a more recent phenomenon, Canada, along with Australia and the United States, has been characterised as a classical immigration country (Castles and Miller 2003: 7). With the exception of the Aboriginal population, Canada is a country of immigrants, and for more than a century Canadian population policy has focused largely on immigration (Ley and Hiebert 2001). In 2006, immigrants accounted for about 20 per cent of the country's population, a figure that, together with that for Australia, is higher than those of the United States and most European nations. Immigrants are also highly concentrated in Canada's three major metropolitan areas. Almost 70 per cent of immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2006 settled in Toronto (40 per cent), Montreal (15 per cent) and Vancouver (14 per cent) (Statistics Canada 2006a). According to the UNDP (2004: 99) Toronto has the second-highest share of foreign-born population (44 per cent in 2001) among the world's major cities, exceeded only by Miami. Not surprisingly, given its preeminence as an immigrant city and its diversity of ethnic groups, Toronto has been characterised as *The World in a City* (Anisef and Lanphier 2003).[1]

Although Canada and the United States share somewhat similar immigration histories, US cities are still characterised by extreme racial divides—very high black–white segregation accompanied by a rapid growth of Asian and Latino populations. In Canada, changes in immigration policy beginning in the early 1970s have resulted in an increased proportion of racial minorities, accounting for 43 per cent of Toronto's population by 2006 (Statistics Canada 2006a). When considering the spatial segregation of ethnic groups within the major immigrant-receiving centres, Canada is often viewed as occupying an intermediate position between Europe and the United States (Musterd *et al.* 1998: 8), somewhat higher levels of segregation than in continental Europe, Australia and New Zealand but not as high as Blacks in the United States (Balakrishnan and Gyimah 2003: 122; Johnston *et al.* 2007).

Despite relatively modest levels of ethnic segregation there has been recent research interest concerning the question of whether Canadian cities have ghettos similar to many US cities. Most studies suggest not (Balakrishnan *et al.* 2005; Qadeer and Kumar 2006; Smith 2004; Walks and Bourne 2006), although the evidence tends to be based on broadly defined visible minority groups such as Blacks and South Asians, groups that internally are quite heterogeneous. While it is generally accepted that the extreme form of ghettoised African-American neighbourhood found in many American cities is quantitatively and qualitatively different from ethnic enclaves in large Canadian cities, there is evidence that many recent immigrants are not faring well economically, especially in Toronto's inner-suburban ethnic enclaves (United Way of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council on Social Development 2004).[2] However, regardless of increased research interest and concerns expressed by social service agencies, Canada has experienced relatively little public debate on the effect of minority ethnic concentration on the integration of these groups. Canadians' views

towards immigration also continue to be relatively positive. Cross-national public opinion polls indicate that Canadians are more tolerant towards immigration and ethnic minorities than any other country surveyed (Hiebert 2006: 40–4).[3]

Given the varying opinions from academic research, service agencies and public opinion polls, what is the reality? Is there cause for concern, especially for migrants who entered Canada in the last three decades? That is the focus of this paper. Specifically, the paper will (1) briefly review Toronto's changing ethnic geography in the post-World War Two period and suggest reasons for the shift in spatial patterns, (2) identify and contrast the differential functional integration of selected immigrant groups who arrived in Toronto primarily in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s with those who arrived later, focusing particularly on their labour market and housing experiences, and (3) provide a more subjective perspective of minority ethnic concentration and integration by focusing on Bangladeshi immigrants who have settled in the Victoria Park area of Toronto. In particular, we question whether spatial concentration necessarily equates with a lack of integration. Is it possible for an immigrant group to integrate into the receiving society while being residentially concentrated?

Theoretical Perspectives

Before moving to the main part of the paper it is important to clarify our understanding of immigrant concentration and integration. The classic interpretation of immigrant concentration in North American cities is based on the theoretical and empirical work of the Chicago School of Social Ecology. The basic argument is that immigrants first concentrate spatially in older, less-expensive housing close to the centre of the city and, upon improving their economic status, move outwards through increasingly higher-status residential zones, ultimately ending up at the urban periphery. The underlying process is characterised as invasion-succession, with one group invading and succeeding another as the latter moves upwards economically and outwards spatially. It is also assumed that, as immigrants move outwards, they will continue to adapt to life in the new country and assimilate culturally and spatially. Massey (1985) further refined the concept of spatial assimilation by identifying acculturation and social mobility as the primary factors in achieving spatial assimilation. Massey argued that, as newcomers acquire the language and values of the receiving society (acculturation) and improve their economic status (social mobility), they move from inner-city immigrant reception areas to a more spatially dispersed suburban environment.

Beginning in the 1970s, a more complex structural-spatial division of the postmodern metropolis emerged resulting primarily from economic restructuring, demographic changes and increasingly diverse immigrant flows. Marcuse and van Kempen (2000: 4) mention several new socio-spatial formations, of which the most important for this discussion are (1) the emergence of gentrified neighbourhoods and areas of potential gentrification near the downtown core, and (2) the development of

increasingly diverse ethnic enclaves (clusters of specific ethnic groups with associated retail, cultural and institutional functions), especially in the suburbs. Widespread gentrification limits affordable housing options in central-city immigrant reception areas and thus alters the spatial balance of immigrant settlement. Consequently, both new immigrants and immigrants originally located in central-city reception areas may (re)locate to the suburbs, many in the spatial concentrations that Li (1998) has conceptualised as ethnoburbs.

Recent research has underscored the increased spatial diversity of immigrant settlement in North American cities. In New York and Los Angeles, for example, Logan *et al.* (2002) found spatial concentrations of immigrant groups in both central cities and suburbs. Similarly, Price *et al.* (2005) noted how Washington's ethnic geography became increasingly complex in the 1990s, with some groups tending to concentrate, others showing various levels of spatial dispersion and many recent immigrants settling directly in the suburbs. The diverse nature of these results calls into question the continued relevance of the spatial assimilation model. We consider this issue in the first empirical section.

Despite the importance of immigrant integration there is no single definition of the term (George 2006; Jedwab 2006). Integration can be viewed as both a process and an outcome, as an individual and a group phenomenon, as a dichotomous category or a 'range of adaptations' and as a 'one-way' process or a series of negotiated interactions between new immigrants and the receiving society. In this study we define integration as the extent to which immigrants are able to achieve their needs and fulfill their interests in the new country (Anisef and Lanphier 2003: 5).

Theorising immigrant integration in Canada, Goldlust and Richmond (1974) contend that, in addition to length of residence in the new country, specific objective and subjective factors influence the degree to which immigrant groups integrate into the receiving society. Objective factors range from relatively short-term concerns such as housing, language, education and employment to longer-term issues such as citizenship and civic participation. The former are usually referred to as functional integration whereas the latter refer to civic integration (Ray 2002: 3). In contrast, subjective factors include variables such as identification with the new country, internalisation of its values and norms and satisfaction with the overall immigration and settlement process (Goldlust and Richmond 1974). Thus, integration is a potentially complex process incorporating a wide range of variables, not all of which have been fully included in empirical studies.

In the second empirical section we focus on functional integration, drawing on custom tabulations from the 2001 Canadian census to contrast the labour market and housing positions of selected immigrant groups who arrived in Toronto prior to and following 1980. In particular, we ask how these groups compare to Toronto's residents as a whole and to each other. Because of economic restructuring and changes in immigration policy, the 1970s is a watershed in Canadian immigration that has important implications for Toronto's ethnic structure and geography.

In the third empirical section we focus on the experiences of Bangladeshi newcomers—one of the most impoverished and residentially concentrated immigrant groups in Toronto—paying particular attention to their satisfaction with the overall migration and settlement process. Here we consider the development of the Victoria Park area and a more subjective interpretation of integration based on the feelings and experiences of Bangladeshi immigrants, especially in the context of residence and neighbourhood.

The presence of central-city ethnic enclaves and new forms of suburban enclaves raises the question of whether these ethnic concentrations inhibit integration. The underlying premise is that immigrant settlement patterns mirror numerous complex social processes, one of which is exclusion from the receiving society. Although in many instances this may be true, it is also problematic. For example, the Jewish population in Toronto is highly clustered but not economically disadvantaged. Debate on the advantages and disadvantages of ethnic concentration is wide-ranging and there is no agreement on what constitutes an ideal social or ethnic mix (Bolt *et al.* 1998). Based on evidence from this study we consider this issue in the conclusion.

Differential Patterns of Ethnic Concentration: Toronto's Changing Post-WWII Ethnic Geography

Although Toronto has been a major Canadian port of entry for immigrants since the late-nineteenth century, the city's foreign-born population has increased dramatically in recent years, from 33 per cent of the total population in 1961 to 46 per cent in 2006 (Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1961; Statistics Canada 2006a).[4] The shift in countries of origin and settlement patterns of recent immigrants during this period has been even more dramatic. There are two distinct stages in Toronto's post-WWII immigrant geography: (1) a period of primarily European settlement in central Toronto between 1945 and 1980 and (2) the emergence of a multi-ethnic suburban immigrant landscape following 1980. The shift in spatial patterning between these two periods is clearly evident in Figures 1 and 2, which show the distribution of recent immigrants in Toronto in 1971 and 2006.

Between 1945 and 1980 the major areas of recent immigrant settlement were immediately east and west of the downtown core (Figure 1). Here, European groups such as Italians, Portuguese and Greeks, relying extensively on chain migration, settled in spatially distinct immigrant reception areas where they established their own ethnic businesses and cultural and religious organisations. Many of these immigrants soon acquired home-ownership, often by renting out part of their house to co-ethnics, thus generating a steady source of income to pay off the mortgage. Non-institutional sources of finance, particularly second mortgages from co-ethnics, enabled new immigrants to circumvent potential discriminatory practices by institutional lenders (Murdie 1991). Many of these immigrants worked in the construction industry and developed skills that enabled them to renovate their homes, thus increasing their resale value. Investment in housing provided immigrants
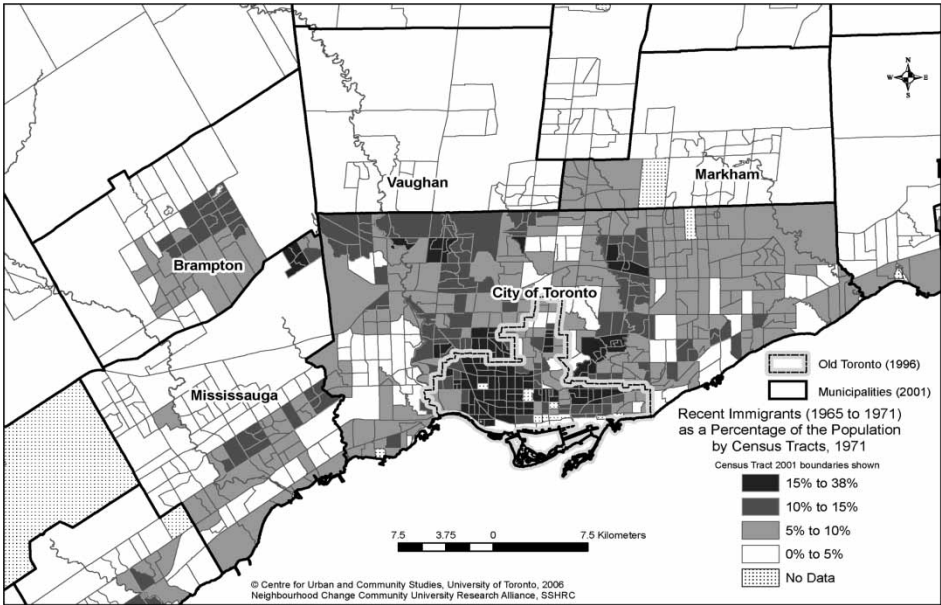
Figure 1. Recent immigrants (1965–1971) in the Toronto CMA, 1971

not only with a secure place to live and a sense of belonging in Canada but ultimately with a form of integration independent of their socio-economic status. Although some members of these groups remained in inner-city enclaves, many ultimately
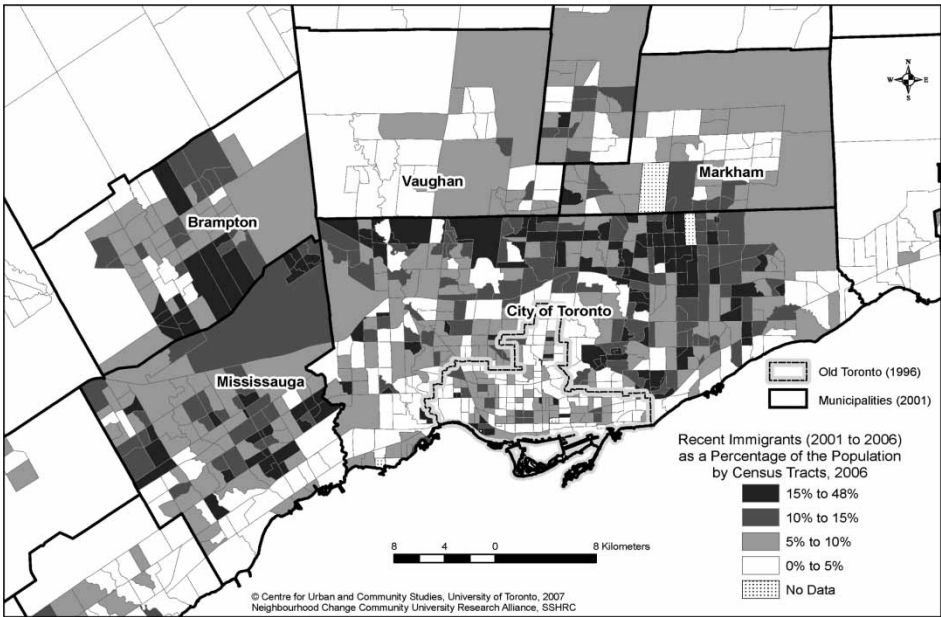

Figure 2. Recent immigrants (2001–2006) in the Toronto CMA, 2006

moved to the suburbs and, in contrast to Massey's (1985) spatial assimilation model, often formed spatially concentrated residential enclaves.

The period following 1980 can be characterised as the emergence of a multi-ethnic suburban immigrant landscape resulting from the relocation of previous inner-city residents and the settlement of newly arrived immigrant groups directly in the suburbs (Figure 2). For those who previously lived in the inner city, home-ownership was a vehicle for economic mobility, providing capital for a larger and more modern suburban home (Teixeira 2007). By 2001, European groups such as Italians, Portuguese and Greeks had achieved a high level of home-ownership, considerably above the Toronto average.

The period beginning in 1980 resulted in a dramatic shift in immigrant origins from European countries to various countries in Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Africa. The increase in immigrants from Asian countries and the decline in immigrants from European countries have been particularly dramatic. Over 90 per cent of the immigrant population living in the Toronto area in 2006, who arrived before 1961, came from Europe. In contrast, less than 15 per cent of those arriving between 1991 and 2006 emigrated from Europe (Statistics Canada 2006b). This change resulted primarily from a shift in Canadian immigration policy. From 1945 to the early 1970s Canadian immigration policy favoured white European immigrants. At that time there was a need to provide labour, especially in the manufacturing and construction industries, for a rapidly growing postwar economy.

Beginning in the early 1970s, post-industrial economic restructuring took hold and Canada faced a reduced need for manufacturing workers and an increased demand for both high- and low-skilled service workers. These structural changes were accompanied by the spatial decentralisation of manufacturing and routine office functions and the increased gentrification of inner-city neighbourhoods. As a result of the latter, housing in these traditional immigrant reception areas became increasingly less available to lower-income newcomers. Consequently, by the 1990s, new immigrants largely by-passed the inner city and settled directly in the suburbs both within the current City of Toronto and in the outer suburbs (e.g. Mississauga, Brampton, Vaughan and Markham in Figure 2).

As a result of changes in immigration policy, immigrants arriving after 1980 represent a wide spectrum of immigrant classes, including business people with entrepreneurial skills and capital to invest, independent (economic) migrants with relatively high levels of education and proficiency in English or French, immigrants sponsored by close relatives, and refugees admitted on humanitarian grounds. Consequently, the residential geographies of these groups are more complex than those of the European immigrants who first settled in inner-city reception areas. For example, Chinese from Hong Kong and Mainland China arriving as skilled workers or business immigrants have settled primarily in high-status suburban enclaves characterised by large owner-occupied homes and multi-store Asian-theme malls (the north-eastern part of the City of Toronto and Markham in Figure 2). Similarly,

Indian newcomers are generally able to afford home-ownership and reside in western suburbs such as Mississauga and Brampton (Figure 2).

In contrast to these relatively well-off groups, Bangladeshis—who are among the most impoverished of Toronto's recent immigrants—have settled in high-rise rental apartments in the inner suburbs, especially the eastern part of the City of Toronto (Figure 3).[5] Similarly, immigrants and refugees from African countries such as Somalia and Ghana have concentrated in a few high-rise buildings in other parts of the inner suburbs. Reasons include the availability of relatively low-cost housing in these areas, proximity to low-waged suburban job opportunities and the role of social networks in the housing search process (Owusu 1999). These groups tend to have large households that lead to overcrowding in private-sector rental buildings, increased wear and tear on the infrastructure and in many cases further physical decline of already deteriorated buildings. In addition, the African groups do not have the strong commercial and institutional infrastructure of earlier European groups or of some recently arrived Asian groups such as Chinese and Indians.

Clearly, the settlement patterns of immigrants and refugees have changed substantially in Toronto during the post-WWII period. Groups who settled initially in immigrant reception areas in the inner city have moved to the suburbs, often resettling in spatially concentrated ethnic enclaves. In contrast, post-1980 immigrant groups have generally by-passed central-city immigrant reception areas and settled directly in suburban enclaves, some with relatively high incomes as owner-occupiers of single-family residences and others in high-rise rental apartments. The evolving patterns do not fit the traditional spatial assimilation model of immigrant settlement and for recently arrived immigrants parallel the diversity of patterns found in other North American cities (Logan *et al.* 2002; Price *et al.* 2005; Singer *et al.* 2008).
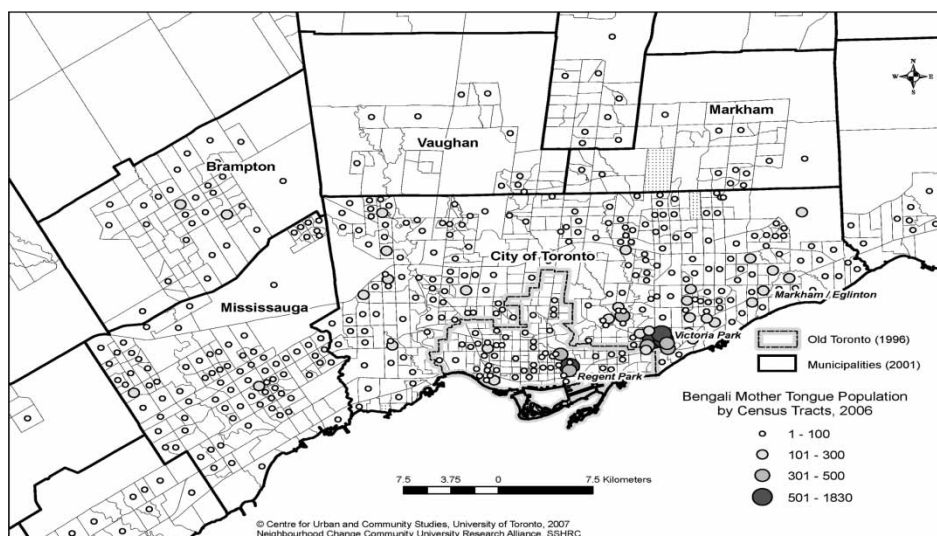

Figure 3. Bengali mother-tongue population, Toronto CMA, 2006

Differential Functional Integration: Experiences of Selected Immigrant Groups in Pre- and Post-1980 Toronto

In this section we use custom data tabulations from the 2001 Canadian census to determine the labour market and housing positions of a set of immigrant groups who entered Toronto in the pre- and post-1980 periods. We argue that measures such as income and home-ownership are important, albeit incomplete, indicators of successful functional integration. In particular, we include measures of (1) labour market integration, including educational achievement, occupational status, un-employment and income and (2) housing integration, including home-ownership, persons per household, housing condition and the proportion of income spent on shelter. In addition, we include single-parent families as a measure of the number of potential earners in the family. Linguistic integration is also important but we do not have a readily available measure of this dimension (Jedwab 2006; Ray 2002). The immigrant groups were defined using a combination of ethnic origin and visible minority data from the Canadian census.[6] The data include both first and subsequent generations of immigrants who have self-identified as members of an ethnic or visible minority group.

Of the pre-1980 immigrant groups in Table 1, the Italians were the earliest to arrive, followed by the Greeks and finally the Portuguese. By the 1990s immigration had virtually ceased for these groups. With respect to labour market integration, each entered Canada with relatively low levels of education and this remains the case, especially for the Portuguese. Members of these groups are at least three times as likely as Toronto's adults to have only elementary-level schooling and considerably less likely to possess a university degree. On the other hand, their unemployment rates are below the Toronto average. Occupational status and household incomes, except for the Portuguese, are about average for the city as a whole, and the incidence of low-income families is relatively low. In the absence of a high level of schooling they have been able to achieve remarkable economic prosperity, primarily because of their success in construction and manufacturing enterprises that flourished in Toronto in the 1960s and 1970s.

An early start in the home-ownership market also led to a successful housing career since most members of these groups were able to move from downtown immigrant reception areas to more spacious and modern housing in the suburbs. Even those still living in inner-city immigrant enclaves stand to gain financially because of the increased value of their houses as gentrification takes hold. Between 80 and 90 per cent of Italian, Portuguese and Greek households own their house, compared to 63 per cent of Toronto's households as a whole (Table 1). These houses generally have a value close to the Toronto average and are in good condition. Equally important, housing affordability is not a major problem for these groups. Relatively few households spend more than the Canadian government's guideline of a maximum of 30 per cent of income on shelter. Therefore, although many Italian, Portuguese and Greek households continue to live in spatially concentrated enclaves, they have been

Table 1. Immigrant population, labour-market and housing integration, pre-1980 ethnic groups, Toronto CMA, 2001

Variables	Toronto	Italian	Portuguese	Greek
Immigrant population (%)				
Born outside Canada	45.2	43.5	64.2	52.5
Immigrated 1991–2001	17.0	0.9	6.7	2.2
Labour-market integration				
Educational achievement: % population 20+ years not in school full-time, with:				
Elementary education only (<Grade 9)	9.2	27.8	33.9	25.5
University degree	24.9	13.7	5.5	16.0
Occupation (% all occupations)				
Managerial, professional, other skilled	57.1	59.8	46.2	56.6
Unskilled sales, service, manual	11.3	11.2	22.1	14.0
Unemployment: labour force 15+ years				
Unemployment rate (%)	5.9	3.4	3.8	4.8
Income				
Low-income families (%)	14.4	8.3	11.4	10.6
Average household income (CAD)	76,454	79,060	68,951	72,468
Family composition (%)				
Lone-parent families	16.4	10.7	12.0	13.6
Housing integration				
Dwellings owned (%)	63.1	89.3	78.9	78.2
Persons per household	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.1
Dwellings needing major/minor repair (%)	31.8	25.4	25.7	31.5
Households (%) spending:				
30+% of income on shelter	28.9	22.2	26.3	28.1
50+% of Income on shelter	12.2	8.2	10.4	7.1

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada Custom Product EO1025.

Note: For definitions of ethnic groups: see Note 6.

able to satisfy their needs and fulfill their interests in Toronto not so much through educational advancement, although this is likely to improve in the second generation and beyond, but by success in the labour and housing markets. As communities they have also developed functioning enclaves with commercial and institutional facilities that serve their specific needs. In sum, they have achieved a relatively high level of functional integration.

The success of post-1980 immigrants in labour market and housing integration has been much more uneven. Table 2 contrasts the experiences of four immigrant groups from diverse regions of the world characterised by vastly different levels of education, income and home-ownership. The Chinese and Indians are in the strongest economic position. Education levels are relatively high, with about one-third of adults possessing a university degree. Unemployment rates are just above the Toronto average. Incomes of the Chinese are slightly above the Toronto average, with Indians just below, a pattern that also holds for occupational status. Almost three-quarters of Chinese households and two-thirds of Indian households own their homes; both

Table 2. Immigrant population, labour-market and housing integration, post-1980 ethnic groups, Toronto CMA, 2001

Variables	Toronto	Chinese	Indian	Black African	Bangladeshi
Immigrant population (%)					
Born outside Canada	45.2	79.9	74.9	66.4	86.8
Immigrated 1991–2001	17.0	40.7	37.7	38.7	75.6
Labour-market integration					
Educational achievement: % population 20+ years not in school full-time, with:					
Elementary education only (<Grade 9)	9.2	13.5	9.8	6.3	4.9
University degree	24.9	31.7	33.2	15.3	51.4
Occupation (% all occupations)					
Managerial, professional, other skilled	57.1	58.6	47.6	38.1	42.9
Unskilled sales, service, manual	11.3	9.5	13.3	19.0	21.0
Unemployment: labour force 15+ years					
Unemployment rate (%)	5.9	8.2	7.9	13.4	14.4
Income					
Low-income families (%)	14.4	22.4	17.0	45.4	59.6
Average household income (CAD)	76,454	79,060	73,323	39,994	33,925
Family composition					
Lone-parent families (%)	16.4	10.1	10.1	44.4	4.2
Housing integration					
Dwellings owned (%)	63.1	73.9	63.8	19.8	18.7
Persons per household	2.8	3.4	3.8	3.2	3.8
Dwellings needing major/minor repair (%)	31.8	31.0	27.9	34.9	39.8
Households (%) spending:					
30+% of income on shelter	28.9	34.1	32.9	43.2	50.7
50+% of Income on shelter	12.2	17.1	13.4	21.9	29.6

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada Custom Product EO1025.
Note: For definitions of ethnic groups: see Note 6.

exceed the Toronto average. The share of households who spend more than 30 per cent of their income on shelter is only slightly above the Toronto average.

In contrast, Black Africans and Bangladeshis are in a particularly difficult economic position. In spite of relatively high levels of education, occupational status is relatively low, unemployment rates are more than twice the Toronto average and household incomes about half. In addition, 45 per cent of African and 51 per cent of Bangladeshi families are below Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off level. The African group is also characterised by a high proportion of single-parent families (44 per cent) with the likelihood of only one major earner in the family. Home-ownership for both groups is very low (less than 20 per cent) and both groups spend an extremely large proportion of their household income on shelter: 43 per cent of African households and 51 per cent of Bangladeshi families spend more than 30 per cent of their income

on housing; 22 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, spend more than 50 per cent. Clearly these two groups have severe income and affordability problems and have yet to achieve integration, at least in an economic sense. This is particularly alarming for the Africans, many of whom have been in Canada longer than the Bangladeshis.

There are a number of reasons (beyond their recent arrival) why some immigrant groups from the post-1980 period are struggling. These include economic restructuring, barriers in the labour market, retrenchment of the welfare state and housing affordability problems. These are constraints that pre-1980 European immigrants did not face. Beginning in the 1970s there has been an important sectoral shift in jobs from mainly-unionised employment in manufacturing to the service sector, especially financial activities, producer services and low-waged health and personal services. Economic restructuring has privileged jobs in the high end of the service economy and in low-order services at the expense of relatively well-paid manufacturing jobs (Hiebert 2006: 43–4). Many immigrants now enter Canada with higher levels of education and training than those who arrived before 1980 and therefore should have better opportunities in a restructured labour market. However, discriminatory practices and the lack of recognition of educational and professional credentials from other countries often prevent entry to the professions these immigrants are trained in.

New immigrants also face serious problems in the housing market, primarily as a result of difficulties accessing adequate and affordable housing (Murdie 2003). These difficulties result from low vacancies in the rental sector, especially for larger units, relatively high rents, long waiting lists for a limited supply of social housing and the fact that virtually no new social housing has been built in Toronto since the mid-1990s. Given constraints in labour and housing markets it is unlikely that these newcomers will experience the same level of functional integration, at least not as quickly, as earlier European migrants. Within this context, how do marginalised groups of newcomers such as the Bangladeshis cope and is residential concentration a barrier to integration for this group? How do the various subjective aspects of integration mitigate these barriers? We consider these issues in the next section.

The Importance of Subjective Integration: Bangladeshis in Toronto's Victoria Park Area

Bangladeshis are one of Canada's most recent immigrant groups.[7] Almost three-quarters of the group arrived between 1996 and 2006 (Statistics Canada 2006c). By 2006, 33,230 Bangladeshi immigrants had settled in Canada, of whom 57 per cent lived in the Toronto area. Most arrived in Canada as independent (economic) migrants, corresponding with increased emphasis by the Canadian government on economic immigrants after 1995. Thus, by virtue of immigrant selection criteria, many Bangladeshi migrants are 'designer immigrants'—young, well educated and with professional skills. Yet, as noted in Table 2, Bangladeshis are among Toronto's most impoverished ethnic groups. They are also one of the most residentially

segregated groups in Toronto (Index of Segregation = 75; Bangladeshi immigrants vs. non-immigrant population by census tract, 2001).[8]

There are three major Bangladeshi neighbourhoods in Toronto: 1) the Victoria Park area—also known as 'Little Bangladesh'; 2) Regent Park, a social-housing complex immediately east of downtown Toronto, built in the 1940s and 1950s; and 3) the Markham Road and Eglinton Avenue area in Scarborough (Figure 3). Of these, the Victoria Park area is the largest and most institutionally complete cluster. Victoria Park is primarily a high-rise apartment complex in the east Don Valley Parklands area, about eight km from downtown Toronto. It is an area of the city that was underdeveloped until the late 1960s when massive high-rise buildings, most over 20 storeys in height, were built. The area has easy access to the Victoria Park subway station and good connections to downtown Toronto by the Bloor–Danforth subway line. Like other high-density developments that emerged in central Toronto during the same period, it was initially targeted for young singles and couples without children. Subsequently, however, it has become an immigrant reception area.

Bangladeshi key informants confirmed that the Victoria Park area adheres to the 'invasion-succession' pattern. First, Eastern Europeans settled here, followed by Sylheti Bangladeshis from Montreal, and most recently new immigrants from a variety of South Asian countries including Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. About 60 per cent of the population is immigrant and 23 per cent arrived during the five-year period 2001–06 (City of Toronto 2006). Bangladeshis have the largest representation among new immigrants, followed by Pakistanis and Indians. The median household income in this area is well below the Toronto average—just under $40,000 compared to $64,100 for Toronto (City of Toronto 2006; Statistics Canada 2006a).

As in various European cities (e.g. Gardner 1993; Knights and King 1998; Peach 1990, 1996; Phillips 2006), Bangladeshis in Toronto are spatially concentrated, institutionally complete and maintain strong kinship ties that are reflected in their living arrangements. These two issues have played an important role in their residential concentration in Toronto and more specifically in the Victoria Park area. Danforth Avenue, the main commercial street in Victoria Park, contains several Bangladeshi retail stores and services including grocery and clothing stores, beauty parlours, photographic studios, entertainment stores, remittance centres and immigration consultants. In addition, the main offices of two Bengali newspapers and community agencies serving Bangladeshi-Canadians are located here. Several mosques, including the 'Baitur' mosque built by Bangladeshis in the late 1990s, are located in the immediate vicinity. Thus, within a decade a remarkably complete Bangladeshi ethnic enclave has developed in this area.

With respect to subjective integration, satisfaction with the initial settlement process seems to have played an important role in helping Bangladeshis overcome the various barriers associated with a low level of functional integration. For instance, many living in the Victoria Park area indicated that they settled in this area because of the presence of a Bangladeshi enclave, where acquiring a job and a place to live would

be relatively easy, thereby diminishing the psychological and material costs of migration (Gardner 1995; Massey *et al.* 1998).

> We came [*to Toronto*] because, even when I was in Dhaka we knew some people here in Teesdale [*apartment buildings in Victoria Park*], I actually contacted them before coming—I telephoned them … but, this is not just because I knew, I am confident that even if I didn't [*know anyone*], this is like coming to your own place, someone would surely help us (Mr J.H.).

When recounting how they were 'lucky' to have 'a place of their own' in a foreign land, many Bangladeshis viewed these apartment buildings as spaces of hope. Even more fascinating, the respondents often viewed the Bengali areas in general and particular buildings in this way before arriving in Canada. As one respondent noted:

> When we decided to come to Canada, of course we had connections … well, we knew people who had friends and family in Toronto … look even if we did not really know someone—I am sure we would not be left on the street, my children will go hungry and other Bengalis will just look [*make sure*] that will never happen (Mr M.Q.).

The Bangladeshis' sense of belonging is highly localised, confined within the apartment buildings of the Bengali enclave in Victoria Park. One reason for this is their dependence on social networks forged with other Bangladeshi residents for various practical purposes such as day-care services, employment and psychological support. Another reason is their strong desire to live separately from people of European origin (including British Canadians) and other South Asians. In practice, they have limited contact with British-Canadians in Victoria Park:

> I don't know many British people here, I am told they are usually nice and polite … those living here, I know, don't like us. So, there is no need for us to talk to them right? (Mr Ch.).

Their aversion to other South Asians, especially Pakistanis, often results from their past history as a transposed geography of fear:

> If a condition [*arises*] where a Bangladeshi must choose between living near an Indian or a Pakistani, most would prefer to live near an Indian … we remember what we have faced and there is always this uneasiness which is difficult to overcome (Mrs Q.).

Although most of the respondents were satisfied with the fact that they had successfully migrated to Canada where their children would have a better future, very few identified with the new country and particularly with Toronto as a city or with other ethnic groups in Victoria Park. In that respect Victoria Park is a contested space infused with imaginations of an 'ideal neighbourhood'. The ideal neighbourhood, as expressed by the Bangladeshis, is a drug- and crime-free place with a substantial number of Bengali-speaking and Muslim households. Most respondents living in the

apartment buildings described these as a 'Bengali area'. They also noted that, when they were able to buy a place of their own, they would like the place to be 'like this one' (Mr N.S.). Moreover, for many Bangladeshis, the rest of Toronto is like the foreign land or *bidesh—a place where one goes to make money*—while the high-rise apartment buildings in Victoria Park and the surrounding area is their homeland or *desh*—the locus of individual and collective identity.

> For me, Toronto is like a place you go to, you work and then come back home. Nowhere in Toronto do I feel the way I feel when I come here. It is just different. When you go out of here you actually know how it feels (Mrs S.A.).

Although Bangladeshis living in the Victoria Park area are a highly segregated minority group, their decision to live in this area is largely a matter of constrained choice, rather than simply constraint (Murdie 1994). None of the respondents indicated that they were 'forced' or 'steered' towards this part of Toronto. In that sense, even though Victoria Park is a low-income area housing racial minorities, it is by no means a ghetto. Moreover, although the Bangladeshis sometimes engage in spatial contestations with other immigrant groups in Victoria Park, they have been successful in infusing this multiethnic space with their own symbols, smells and colours. It may be argued that by being able to express and retain their distinct cultural identity—an integral part of subjective integration—the Bangladeshis are integrated within Canada's multicultural fabric. On the other hand, they have not developed a full sense of identity with their new country or city, nor have they successfully achieved functional integration.

Conclusion

The findings from this study call into question traditional perspectives on ethnic concentration and integration. With respect to the spatial assimilation model, the results reinforce recent findings from US cities about the diversity of immigrant settlement patterns. Groups such as the Italians, Portuguese and Greeks who arrived in Toronto in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, subsequently moved to the suburbs, but in many instances remain spatially concentrated. In contrast, many recently arrived groups from diverse national backgrounds and economic circumstances have settled directly in the suburbs in a variety of housing situations, often spatially concentrated in newly emerging ethnic enclaves.

Concerning integration, the experiences of Toronto's immigrant groups are highly variable. Southern European groups who arrived primarily before 1980 have achieved considerable economic prosperity and improved their housing situation. In contrast, groups who arrived in the post-1980 period display quite different levels of functional integration. For example the Chinese and Indians exhibit substantial economic prosperity and live in owner-occupied suburban housing while the Bangladeshis and Africans display a much lower level of functional integration. The differential experiences of these groups highlight the importance of considering local circumstances

in the receiving country, in this case economic and housing-market conditions in pre- and post-1980 Toronto.

As indicated by the case study of Bangladeshis, it is important to consider measures of subjective integration, especially satisfaction with life in the new country, and to determine the extent to which subjective integration mitigates barriers brought about by relatively low levels of functional integration. It is also important, as in the case of the Bangladeshis, to recognise the localised nature of the sense of belonging, even at the level of an individual apartment building. In this respect, more research is needed that fully takes into account the complexities of integration, both functional and subjective.

Finally, does spatial concentration always mean a lack of integration? The results from this study suggest not. In contrast to many European countries, policy-makers in Toronto have not seen the spatial concentration of ethnic minorities as problematic. One reason is the success of pre-1980 European groups who remain residentially segregated but have achieved considerable mobility in the labour market and in housing. Equally, post-1980 immigrant groups such as the Chinese and Indians are residentially segregated and functionally well-integrated. Other post-1980 groups such as the Bangladeshis, however, have not been as fortunate, at least with respect to functional integration. Many of these new immigrant groups live in declining inner-suburban neighbourhoods that are increasingly characterised by concentrated poverty, disinvestment and less service provision than other parts of the city. These areas are not ghettos in the US sense and a relatively high level of subjective integration may alleviate the worst aspects of poverty. Is there cause for concern? Is there hope for these migrants? The answers are unpredictable, although awareness of the broader problem and the need for strong neighbourhoods fostered through area-based solutions is growing (Toronto City Summit Alliance 2007).

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1]   Unless otherwise stated, Toronto refers to the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (Toronto CMA).

[2]   The inner suburbs in Toronto are those areas developed primarily from the end of World War Two to the end of the 1970s. On Figures 1, 2 and 3 they include the City of Toronto,

excluding the area identified as Old Toronto. The latter is usually referred to as the central city or the former City of Toronto, an area that was first developed before World War Two.

[3] These polls were undertaken by the Pew Global Attitudes Project (PGAP) in 2002 and IPSOS Polls in 2004.

[4] The discussion in this section draws in part from Murdie and Teixeira (2003, 2006).

[5] Since 'Bangladeshi immigrant population, 2006' is not available by census tract, 'Bengali mother tongue, 2006' was used to map the Bangladeshi population. Mother tongue is the language first learned and still understood. 'Bengali mother-tongue population' also includes an unknown number of Indian Bengalis but the number is probably quite small.

[6] Visible minority status refers to the visible minority (non-White) group that a respondent belongs to (e.g. Black, South Asian, Chinese). This census variable was originally developed to satisfy employment equity concerns. Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origin of the respondent's ancestors (e.g. Italian, Portuguese, Jamaican). Both are controversial and problematic, visible minority because of possible racial implications and ethnic origin because many respondents to the census increasingly identify themselves as Canadian or as multiple-origin. The latter reflects the reality of Canada's multiethnic mosaic.

[7] This section draws in part from Ghosh (2006). The qualitative data are based on interviews with key informants in the Bangladeshi community and a semi-structured questionnaire administered to 30 Bangladeshi households. Of these, 11 lived in the Victoria Park area.

[8] Conceptually, the Index of Segregation indicates the percentage of a particular group who would have to move in order to yield an even spatial distribution of that group. A value of 100 indicates complete segregation and a value of 0, no segregation.

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